

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants respond herein to the Office Action issued October 8, 2008.

Claims 1-12 were rejected in the Office Action. In response to the rejection, Applicants amend Claims 1, 7 and 12, cancel Claim 6 and respectfully request a reconsideration of the rejection. Claims 1-5 and 7-12 remain in this Application after the present Amendment.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the courtesy extended to the Applicants' attorney during the telephone interview conducted on January 7, 2009.

Claims 1-11 were rejected in the Office Action under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,117,692 to Oberg ("Oberg") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,540,440 to Beaujean ("Beaujean") and further in view of EP 0868621 ("EP reference"). Claim 12 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the EP reference in view of Oberg.

As discussed during the interview, Claim 1, as amended, recites an installation for manufacturing a wound rigid tubular pipe. The installation includes an assembly unit 12, a laying ship 42 and a first float 10 positioned between the laying ship and the assembly unit. The assembly unit 12 is connected to the first float with a connector 18 aligning the assembly unit and the first float and allowing a relative vertical movement between the assembly unit and the first float. The assembled rigid tubular pipe 28 is conveyed to the first float over the connector 18. (See, e.g. Figs. 1 and 3). These limitations of Claim 1 are not disclosed in the cited prior art.

Oberg discloses a method and system for producing and laying pipelines on the sea bottom, where the pipe is plastically deformed and wound onto a storage reel. However, as discussed during the interview, Oberg does not disclose or suggest positioning the first float between the assembly unit and the laying ship nor having a connector between the assembly unit and the first float over which the assembled rigid tubular pipe is conveyed.

Neither Beaujean nor the EP reference remedy the above deficiency of Oberg. As the Examiner correctly pointed out in the Office Action, Beaujean does not include a connector between the assembly unit and the first float. The EP reference discloses a connector 14. However, this is a connector between the first float and the laying ship, not a connector between the assembly unit and the first float.

Accordingly, none of the cited references disclose the above limitations of the amended Claim 1.

Therefore, Claim 1 is allowable over the prior art of record. Moreover, Claims 2-5 and 7-11, which depend from Claim 1, are also allowable at least for the same reasons as Claim 1 and, further on their own merits. Finally, Claim 12 recites limitations similar to the discussed limitations of Claim 1. Specifically, Claim 12 recites steps of positioning the connector 18 to connect the assembly unit to the first float 10 positioned between the assembly unit 12 and the laying ship 42, aligning the assembly unit with the first float, and conveying the rigid tubular pipe 28 to the first float over the connector 18. As discussed above, these steps are not disclosed in the prior art of record.

Favorable reconsideration of the rejection and allowance of Claims 1-5 and 7-12 pending in the Application is respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,



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